

THE FUEL WE USE

By FREDERIC J. HASKIN.

Early seventeenth century settlements in America were no question of fuel. How to quicken the timber shading his farm to clear it away from the protection, was all he thought about. He piled great wide-mouthed chimneys and sat on the porch, waiting for the children, piling on more and more until he had never thought of the question of fuel until some day became the twentieth century citizen.

He must solve the problem of fuel. He must find a way to get fuel within his reach, in the manner in which it can be delivered to his home, its compactness in storage, its choice of wood, anthracite, coal, lignite, coke, gas, oil, and briquettes, manufactured from various materials, while the fireless cookers have saved their worth as fuel for the lands of his economical

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\$2 or \$3 a cord on owner's lands in the densely forested Southern Appalachian States to \$9 or \$10 in once heavily timbered regions of the Middle North-west. E. S. Kellogg, chief of the office of wood utilization, forest service, in an address before the Box Manufacturers' association at Kaaterskill, N. Y., a few weeks ago, stated that the present amount of wood consumed per capita is now only one cord and a half cords, against three cords in 1880.

Beginning January 1, 1908, the forest service, in cooperation with the geological survey, will begin an important series of tests to determine the relative fuel value of woods found in the national forests. Experts will compare the fuel value of wood with that of minerals, taking a portable outfit with a twenty-five to fifty horse power steam boiler to places where wood is the chief fuel, and get by experiments the amount of steam developed by different methods of burning wood. In the laboratories of the geological survey tests will be made to determine whether the wood composed of knotty tops and limbs of saw timber has not as great, if not greater, fuel value than the trunks. This would be a sensible, saving step in forestry, utilizing waste products that are usually left to decay by ignorant or indifferent lumbermen. This test, should it bring the desired results, will mean the saving of many millions of dollars to the country each year, and bring into economical use every portion of the felled tree.

During the Louisiana Purchase exposition at St. Louis the geological survey set up a fuel testing plant by which every natural and artificial fuel available was tried. So helpful were the results that the work was continued there after the fair, and the plant was moved to Norfolk this summer, where experiments devoted especially to Southern and Eastern coals are being made daily. These tests have already demonstrated to the public that a saving of 10 per cent of the country's coal bill can be made each year through increased efficiency and greater intelligence in the burning of coal—a saving of \$100,000,000. While the coal supply seems practically inexhaustible in the United States—this country producing annually 38 per cent of the whole world's output—the government still wishes to teach its economical use, and the plant at the Jamestown fair will demonstrate this feature as well as others. The United States spent something like \$4,000,000 last year on imported coal, while exporting \$30,000,000 worth. Wise heads are busy devising means whereby that \$4,000,000 can be diverted from foreign to home pockets, by devising better facilities for shipping or by inventing briquettes that will take the place of wood or coal. The imported coal comes to the Pacific coast and to Boston.

The first recorded mining of anthracite coal was in Pennsylvania in 1814, when twenty-two tons were taken out. Since then that State has contributed 1,700,000,000 tons to the homes, factories and furnaces of this country and Canada. The anthracite field of that State contains 485 square miles, represents an investment of \$700,000,000, and brings in an annual profit of \$85,000,000 to \$100,000,000. Families in a radius of 150 miles of the mines get anthracite at about \$6.75 a ton, and the average family uses from fifteen to twenty tons a year. To New York and its suburbs over 9,000,000 long tons go annually; to Philadelphia, 4,000,000, and to Baltimore, 2,000,000. Anthracite has also been found in Gunnison county, Colorado, and Santa Fe county, New Mexico. The largest coal mining shaft in America is in Wilkesbarre, Pa., being 1060 feet deep and twelve by fifty-two feet in diameter.

The earliest known production of bituminous coal was in the Richmond basin of Virginia in 1822. The Middle States opened their first mines in 1840, and the present State of Washington in 1852. The bituminous area of this country now covers 335,000 square miles. Thirty-one States and Territories are now producing coal in great or small quantities and the consumption per capita has increased from twenty-seven hundredths of a ton in 1850, to four tons and seventy-five hundredths in 1906. In the coal fields there are employed over 630,000 men and boys, and the retail value of the mineral is estimated at \$2,000,000.

When natural gas first came into use the flow was so free and the supply seemed practically so inexhaustible that it was sold at a low rate and without measurement. Each household paid so much a month for a house of so many rooms, and could burn all he wanted. Larger companies soon saw the wastefulness of this plan and introduced meters, and sold the gas by the cubic foot. Its use for illuminating long preceded its use as fuel, although Pittsburgh now uses a half-billion feet every twenty-four hours for both purposes, the Carnegie plant alone consuming 10,000,000 feet a day. The alone Appalachian and Middle West States use ninety-eight per cent of the natural gas of the United States. The first gas piped any distance was from the Harvey well in Butler county, Pennsylvania, to a mill near Pittsburgh, a distance of seventeen miles. This was in 1875. In 1893 gas came into use as fuel. Now over 1,000,000 domestic fires are supplied with this fuel. Now wood and coal to the value of \$50,000,000 are displaced by natural gas at a less cost, making a saving of \$9,000,000. New York uses the least coal and the most gas per capita of any city.

protect it against the action of the atmosphere.

The West long ago tried many plans for devising fuel when none existed. Travelers over the trails resorted to grass, greasewood and chaparral; early settlers in the West found twisted hay excellent for "mending" a fire, and cornstalks and corn cobs have not proved poor substitutes, although the combustion is rapid. During the coal famine of last winter many farmers of the West burned corn, kernels and all. The United States has left few artificial devices untried. Coal dust, lignite, peat and waste products from the mines have been made into substantial briquettes. The binding materials have been as widely varied as the principal



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